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Military Market

MAGAZINE FOR THE MILITARY RESALE SYSTEM ARMY TIMES PUBLISHING COMPANY JUNE 1990 $6.00

STOP WASTING YOUR MONEY!

How timely analysis of the numbers can work for you

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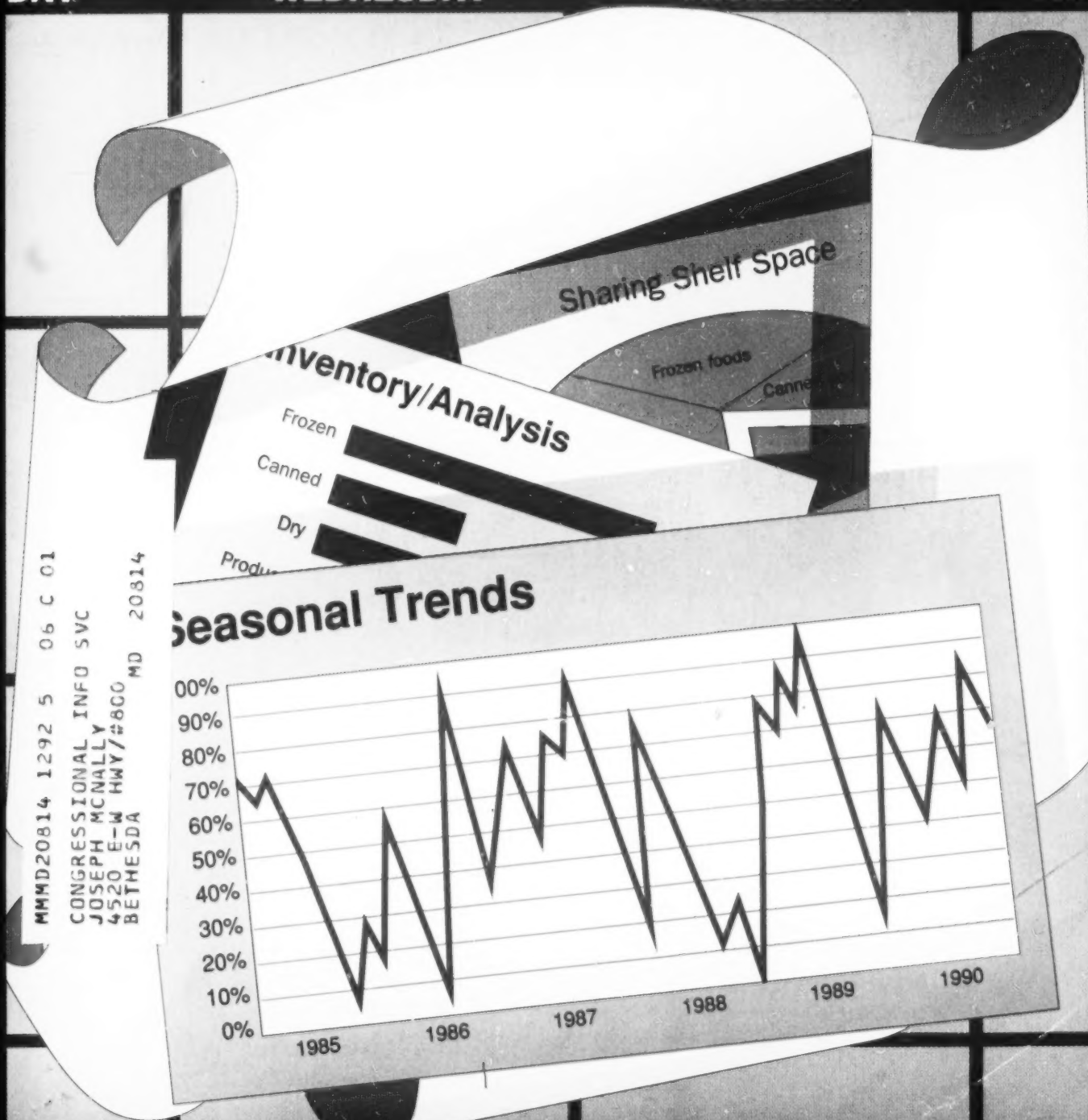

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Military Market Index

COMMISSARIES		FEBRUARY			YEAR-TO-DATE		
		CY'89	CY'90	% CHANGE	CY'89	CY'90	% CHANGE
	CONUS	$109,515	$118,650	+8.34	$220,505	$240,555	+9.09
	OVERSEAS	41,055	43,050	+4.86	83,055	85,575	+3.03
ARMY	**TOTAL**	**150,570**	**161,700**	**+7.39**	**303,560**	**326,130**	**+7.44**
	CONUS	162,954	177,313	+8.81	319,933	355,531	+11.13
	OVERSEAS	35,339	38,085	+7.77	68,477	76,416	+11.59
AIR FORCE	**TOTAL**	**198,293**	**215,398**	**+8.63**	**388,410**	**431,947**	**+11.21**
	CONUS	64,349	69,236	+7.59	123,529	134,444	+8.84
	OVERSEAS	7,051	7,564	+7.28	13,893	14,786	+6.43
NAVY	**TOTAL**	**71,400**	**76,800**	**+7.56**	**137,422**	**149,230**	**+8.59**
	CONUS	12,465	13,249	+6.29	25,779	28,325	+9.88
	OVERSEAS	275	237	–13.82	560	510	–8.93
MARINE CORPS	**TOTAL**	**12,740**	**13,486**	**+5.86**	**26,339**	**28,835**	**+9.48**
	CONUS	271	277	+2.21	527	537	+1.90
	OVERSEAS	289	278	–3.81	605	543	–10.25
COAST GUARD	**TOTAL**	**560**	**555**	**–0.89**	**1,132**	**1,080**	**–4.59**
	CONUS	$349,554	$378,725	+8.35	$690,273	$759,392	+10.01
	OVERSEAS	$84,009	$89,214	+6.20	$166,590	$177,830	+6.75
ALL COMMISSARIES	**TOTAL**	**$433,563**	**$467,939**	**+7.93**	**$856,863**	**$937,222**	**+9.38**

EXCHANGES		FEBRUARY			YEAR-TO-DATE		
	CONUS	$257,960	$297,135	+15.19	$495,610	$577,234	+16.47
	OVERSEAS	201,850	226,758	+12.34	402,327	441,397	+9.71
AAFES	**TOTAL**	**459,810**	**523,893**	**+13.94**	**897,937**	**1,018,631**	**+13.44**
	CONUS[2]	1,316	1,238	–5.93	2,154	2,253	+4.60
	OVERSEAS[2]	2,159	2,812	+30.25	3,225	4,561	+41.43
MAIL ORDER	**TOTAL[3]**	**3,475**	**4,050**	**+16.55**	**5,379**	**6,814**	**+26.68**
	ConUS[4]	91,595	97,843	+6.82	170,867	185,418	+8.52
	OVERSEAS[4]	37,801	42,700	+12.96	75,589	81,090	+7.28
NAVY	**TOTAL[4]**	**129,396**	**140,543**	**+8.61**	**246,456**	**266,508**	**+8.14**
	CONUS	36,223	41,343	+14.13	54,687	64,185	+17.37
	OVERSEAS	5,917	4,605	–22.17	9,815	7,639	–22.17
MARINE CORPS*	**TOTAL[2]**	**42,140**	**45,948**	**+9.04**	**64,502**	**71,824**	**+11.35**
	CONUS[2]	6,771	7,067	+4.37	13,433	13,929	+3.69
	OVERSEAS[2]	591	609	+3.05	1,175	1,205	+2.55
COAST GUARD	**TOTAL[2]**	**7,362**	**7,676**	**+4.27**	**14,608**	**15,134**	**+3.60**
	CONUS	$393,865	$444,626	+12.89	$736,751	$843,019	+14.42
	OVERSEAS	$248,318	$277,484	+11.75	$492,131	$535,892	+8.89
ALL EXCHANGES	**TOTAL**	**$642,183**	**$722,110**	**+12.45**	**$1,228,882**	**$1,378,911**	**+12.21**

1) SOURCE: U.S. Department of Commerce. 2) MM estimate, based on official data. 3) Includes consolidated sales for all services, including Coast Guard. 4) Does not include sales of ships stores. *Because exact figures were not available at press time, Marine Corps exchange figures for February 1990 are estimates. NOTE: Individual figures may not add to totals because of rounding. All sales are expressed in thousands (000), except grocery stores and department stores, which are in billions. Commissary sales include appropriate surcharges; exchange sales include concession volume. Distribution of sales by ConUS and overseas is based on definition by respective service and system. Figures do not include sales tax.

Marty Baumann for Military Market Magazine

Charting the Peaks and Valleys Of Commissary Sales

In the "consolidated life" that is the likely future of the resale system, timely and accurate analysis of trends and seasonality will be more than a visual aid to a marketing strategy — it will mean money saved, and it may mean your salvation.

The first of a two-part feature by Associate Editor Karen McBeth.

When Mike Grosse stumbled onto the idea of graphically charting the commissary sales data reported in the monthly MILITARY MARKET *Index, he knew what it would mean for manufacturers. When he told* MILITARY MARKET *what he was up to, we knew what it would mean for our readers.*

Grosse, formerly a national accounts manager for Military Audits of Market Information, called one February day to request copies of several years' worth of the Index, which has been a regular feature of this magazine since 1971. [See related sidebar, page 32.] *He explained that industry sales and marketing people rely on the Index for key information, often filing or reproducing the pages so that they can compare overall sales from month to month, or year to year. He said they use the figures in conjunction with other data (often MAMI's) about performance of their own individual brands and product categories.*

Grosse saw the need for a visual presentation of the sales figures to illustrate (continued)

long-term trends. While such an analysis is commonly done for individual brands or categories, no one seems to have plotted the overall commissary sales figures.

As he described it during a March interview, he was helping a manufacturer with a budget plan when "it was like the lightbulb came on.

"We were looking at the category trends in peanuts and popcorn and getting a feel for what they were doing in promotions in that time frame. But how did that fit into the total grocery picture? That's where the idea came from."

As Grosse told MILITARY MARKET, *he was "trying to show the manufacturer, so that he in turn could show his management, what was really going on in this [military] business over time. He had to prove to them why he should be promoting [his products] during this time period."*

This is just one example of how MAMI helps manufacturers and brokers to plan their business strategies, and it all comes down to the numbers, many of which come only from MAMI.

However, many sales and marketing people find that there are other numbers at their fingertips which they can also make work for them. One obvious example is the MILITARY MARKET *Index, which appears each month on page 4 of this magazine . . .*

Serious commissary professionals can no longer rely on the "good ole boy" network to sell to the military. The system is more complex than it has ever been, and informed shoppers are demanding more than they ever have. In response, both industry sales people and commissary personnel are becoming more sophisticated.

To remain successful under a consolidated commissary system and in a downsized military, resale officials on all sides have to develop this improved sales and marketing expertise. As the commissary systems consolidate, the combined system will operate more like a civilian retail chain, which means doing less hit-or-miss marketing and more educated planning. And, since there will be only a single system, there will be no second chances to correct mistakes by approaching another service.

Mike Grosse worked for various brokers before he went to MAMI; he has since returned to the brokerage business and is now account manager in sales planning at Eurpac Service Co. Over the years, he has watched the evolution of a business-like approach to the military market.

"Understand, as time has gone on at Military Audits, sophistication has become more and more important," he explained during a March interview, which was conducted while he was still at MAMI. "When I came on board here [at MAMI] two years ago, we were basically just selling reports . . . doing simple top lines for manufacturers."

Grosse said that the "data was too involved for them [manufacturers] to really understand what was going on." So MAMI hired analysts and began using an easy-to-read computer graphics program. As a result, "it's come down to us being the marketing expert for them [manufacturers]."

He added that the manufacturers have "come back to us (as we've gotten sophisticated in the graphics part of it) and they say, 'We want you to take our promotional schedule for the previous year and find out how effective it was. Were our promotions really effective, and were they effective by service? Did we gain a bump [in sales] for the money we spent? And did our competitors gain for the money *they* spent?' "

Grosse says that, as recently as six or seven years ago, he saw a much more casual approach to promotions in the military. Manufacturers' representatives set their voluntary price reductions and then arbitrarily assigned them to various times of the year. "They only looked to see if their volume increased over the year time-period," he said.

. . . in the end, a perfectly planned marketing campaign can be thrown off by the ordering patterns of the commissary systems . . .

"They didn't get into the kind of sophistication they're getting into today . . . [asking questions like] what is the verity of the market tracking, what is the category doing? What is my share and my volume increases by service, and by region?"

On the military side, too, commissary officials have become more exacting marketers — creating their master stock lists, adding and deleting product lines, assigning shelf space, allocating display areas and ordering product according to new analyses.

But there is still much room for improvement. As the military is downsized and as bases are closed, the customer base will shrink and funding will decrease, so commissary managers and their suppliers must make every decision count. They will have to work together to serve their market better.

The ability to follow detailed sales records and watch marketing trends, Grosse says, has "really gotten almost to the scientific point." But an important part of the analysis means throwing out preconceived ideas about why, when or where a product does or does not sell, according to Tom McDonald, another of the national accounts managers at MAMI.

These beliefs need to be based on the real data, McDonald says, and not on guesswork, or even on traditional thinking about selling in the military. "Through utilizing the pieces of information, they [manufacturers] can get a better handle on what works and what doesn't," he concludes.

READ IT IN THE CHARTS

So what does charting the sales data reveal?

The graphs in this article — visual representations from the most recent four year's worth of MILITARY MARKET Indexes, show peaks and valleys in monthly sales. Some of these can be explained readily, but some are not so easily interpreted. There are some expected patterns, while others reveal a few surprises:

- Calculating the percent sales growth for the four calendar years that were tracked reveals some unexpected results. Overall, commissaries averaged an annual 4.9 percent dollar sales growth between 1986 and 1989, not adjusted for inflation. *[See chart, page 36.]* Last year was the best of the three full years — sales were up 5.9 percent. *[On the graphs on page 34 and 35, the increases are seen as gradually rising lines.]*

The Making of an Index

In June of 1971, along with some other major editorial changes, MILITARY MARKET announced the introduction of a new monthly statistical feature: The MILITARY MARKET Index.

Then-Editor Kenneth Rankin billed it as "an exclusive monthly sales report card on each of the systems — solid, up-to-date marketing data never before available anywhere." The Index rapidly became a standard reference for sales and marketing managers throughout the resale system, with back copies squirreled away in desk drawers around the country.

Where does the data come from? Every month, each commissary and exchange agency provides the Army Times Publishing Company's corporate research department with cash register sales data from the most current month available. The figures are reported for ConUS, overseas and worldwide.

Because it takes time for the services to tally the numbers, the data received by the research department lags by about three months. By the time the information gets into print, it is four months behind the actual month being reported, but is nevertheless the most current available.

The sales figures are the most accurate ones the military agencies have — what is actually in their books — and are reported on a calendar year basis to facilitate comparisons with civilian businesses. Before scanning, the information came directly from cash register receipts, and receipts are still the source for non-scanned stores. For those occasional months when one of the services does not have its sales figures tallied in time to make our press deadline, statistical experts in the Army Times Research Department estimate sales for that month.

The research department makes sure that all commissary figures include the 5 percent surcharge and also that sales reported for exchanges include their concession volume. By keeping the data on file, MILITARY MARKET is able to compare one year to the previous one. The research department also uses the information to calculate cumulative yearly sales, the percent change for the month in the current year compared with the same month the year before, and the percent change for the two year-to-date totals.

The Index has undergone a few facelifts over the years. Originally, there were two Indexes — one for commissaries and another for exchanges; this started in June 1971 and continued while MILITARY MARKET was published in separate commissary and exchange editions. When the two editions were combined in July 1978, the Indexes also were combined. Later, they were enlarged, and still later, some black and white tinting was added to improve readability. Last September, color and graphics were added to the Index and the chart was moved from the back of the magazine to the front.

But the data reported in the monthly MILITARY MARKET Index has remained unchanged: basic, essential figures that marketers plan their activities by. **K.McB.**

The Air Force Commissary Service has had the best overall sales growth of the four systems — on average, 5.4 percent a year over the past four years.

The Navy ranked second in sales growth, with an average annual rate of 4.9 percent.

The Troop Support Agency's growth over the past four years has been 4.6 percent on an annual average.

A loss for Marine Corps commissaries between 1986 and 1987 slowed that service's average annual sales growth to just 2.8 percent over the four-year period.

• The peaks and valleys reveal months where sales are predictably higher or lower than the monthly average. For instance, averaging over the four years, dollar sales in December run about 14 percent higher than the monthly average in any given year. Similarly, February sales seem

The system is more complex than it has ever been, and informed shoppers are demanding more than they ever have.

to run about 12 percent less than the monthly average.

The fact that December and February tend to be, respectively, high and low months isn't a real surprise, because of the high holiday sales in December and the shorter number of selling days in February. But the graph helps explain the situation visually.

"People *perceived* that December was the biggest month," Grosse explained. "Everybody knew [that] all their orders and their shipments were so big, but [by charting it] now we can really see how large it is."

• Over the four-year time frame, the shape of the graphs seems to change, sometimes unexpectedly. While May used to be a high sales month, in later years the sales for that month appear to drop back to average. But at the same time, June sales are growing. Sales in July used to hold their own, but now they drop. Sales for all of the agencies used to increase predictably in October, but now October tends to be a slow month. September used to be a low month, but now it is more level for most services. The severe sales declines which show up in November 1986 and November 1987 don't appear in that month in 1988 or 1989.

• There are differences among the services as well. Most of the agencies show only a slight increase in sales during March, but for the Marine Corps this is a strong, growing month. The Marines also have a real valley in August — even lower than the February valley — which the other services don't experience. The Air Force in 1989 goes against another trend — January is the lowest sales month, and February sales improve.

(The graph for the Navy commissary system, which is provided for purposes of illustration, really cannot be used to reveal sales increases or decreases on a month to month basis. This is because the Navy's accounting periods don't correspond to actual days of the month, and every three months there is a five-week accounting period. This explains why the Navy's graph shows a pattern of regular increases and decreases in three-month increments.)

USING MORE DATA

Mike Grosse says that plotting the figures over several years enables commissary marketers to pull out more in-

(Continued on page 36)

PEAKS AND VALLEYS — COMMISSARY SALES, 1986 – 1989

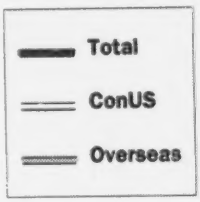
The graphs on these two pages are visual representations of the MILITARY MARKET Index from 1986 through 1989, the most recent four years. They depict the peaks and valleys of monthly commissary sales — by ConUS, by overseas and by worldwide roll-ups — for the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine Corps commissary programs, as well as the combined totals of the four services.

Sales fluctuations are sometimes predictable, as in the month of December, when sales regularly run about 14 percent higher than the monthly average for any given year. Other changes do not follow a pattern, as is the case for the slippage during November 1986 and November 1987, which is **not** continued during November 1988 and November 1989. Other trends and deviations are also apparent.

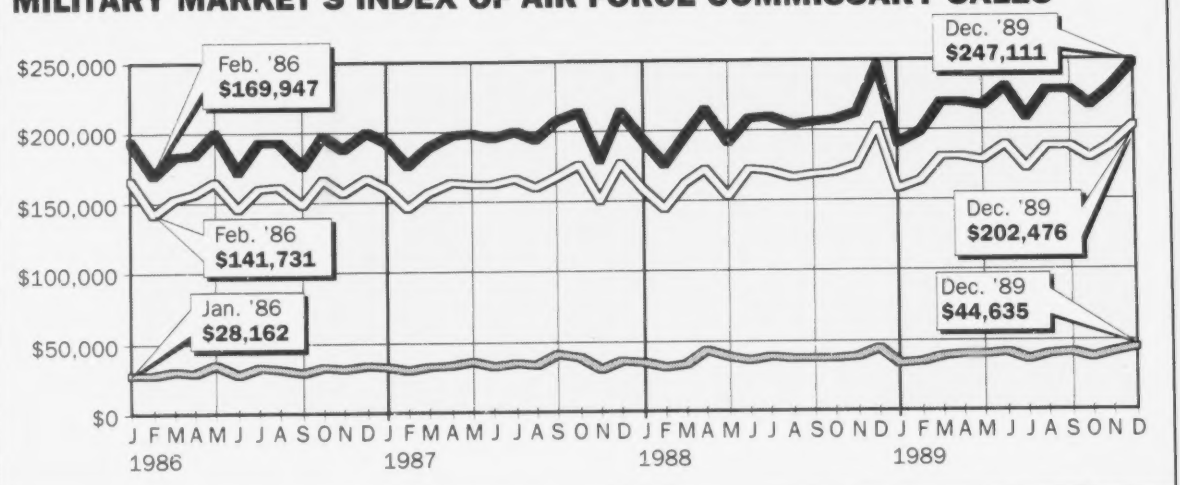
The graph for the Navy commissary system is provided for purposes of illustration, though it does not accurately reveal sales increases or decreases on a month-to-month basis. Because the Navy's accounting periods do not correspond to calendar days, and because there is a five-week accounting period every three months, the Navy graph shows a pattern of regular increases and decreases in three-month increments.

The dates and dollar figures within each graph represent highs and lows for total, ConUS, and overseas sales over the four-year period.

All dollar figures represent millions of dollars (add 000 to each figure), except the Marine Corps amounts for September 1987 and December 1988, which represent thousands of dollars.

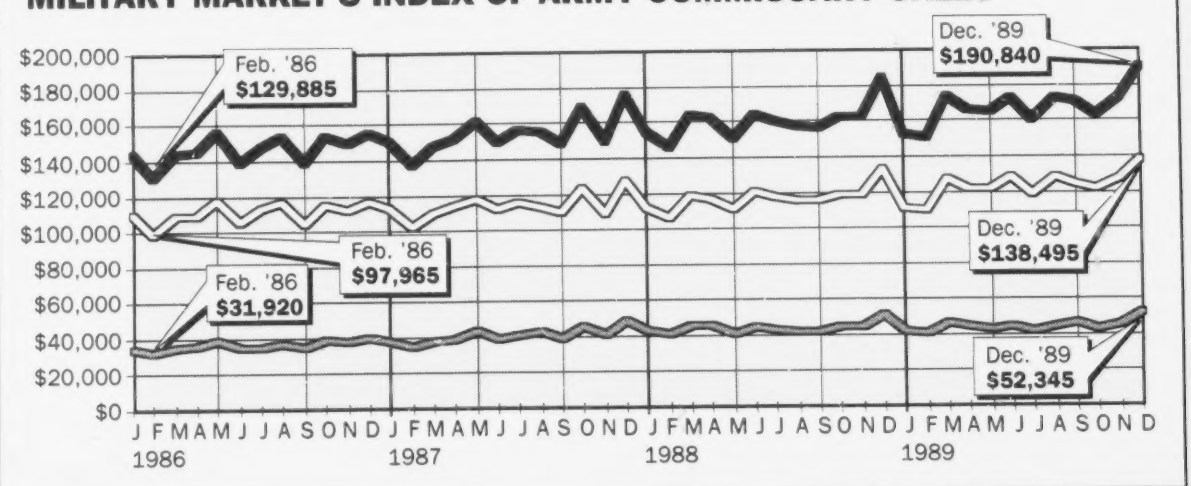


MILITARY MARKET'S INDEX OF AIR FORCE COMMISSARY SALES



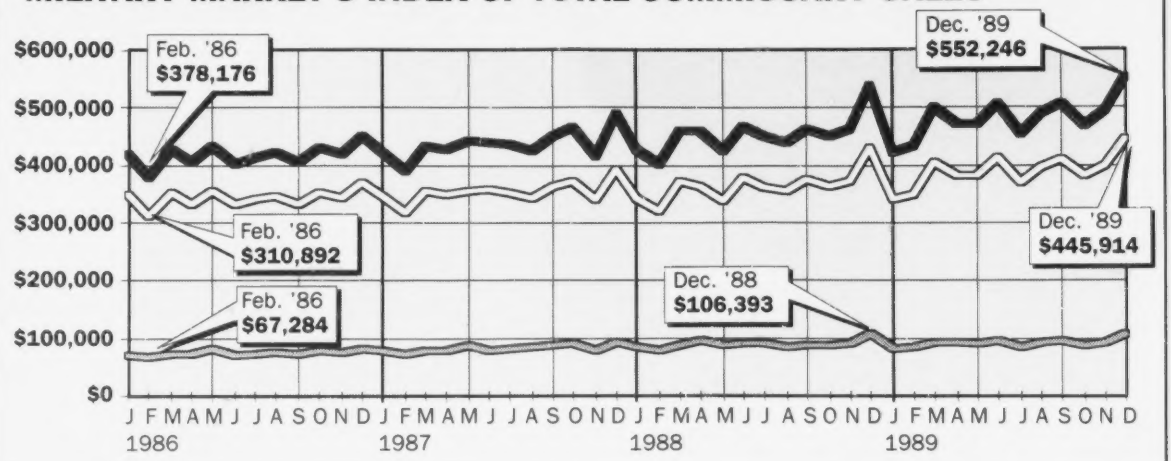
Joanne Ostendorf for Military Market Magazine

MILITARY MARKET'S INDEX OF ARMY COMMISSARY SALES



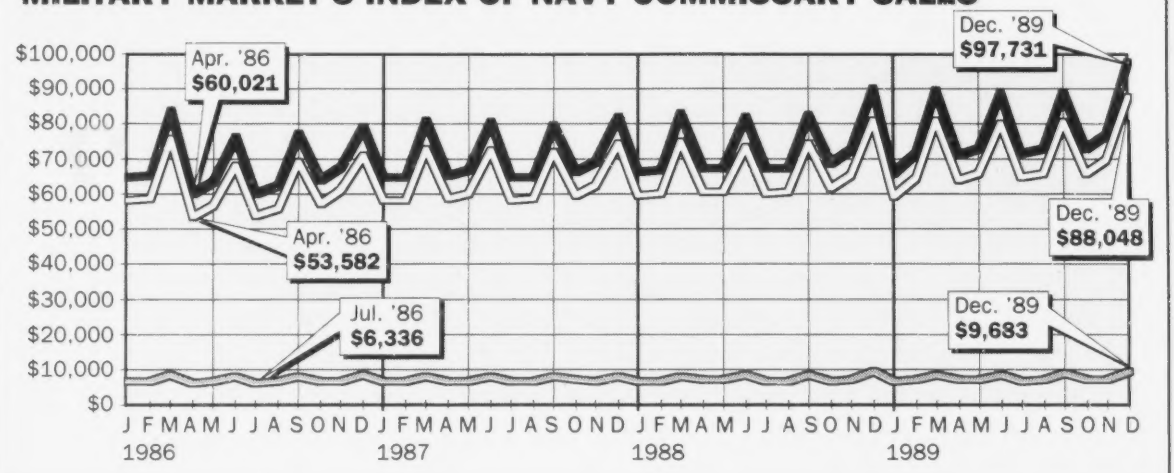
Joanne Ostendorf for Military Market Magazine

MILITARY MARKET'S INDEX OF TOTAL COMMISSARY SALES



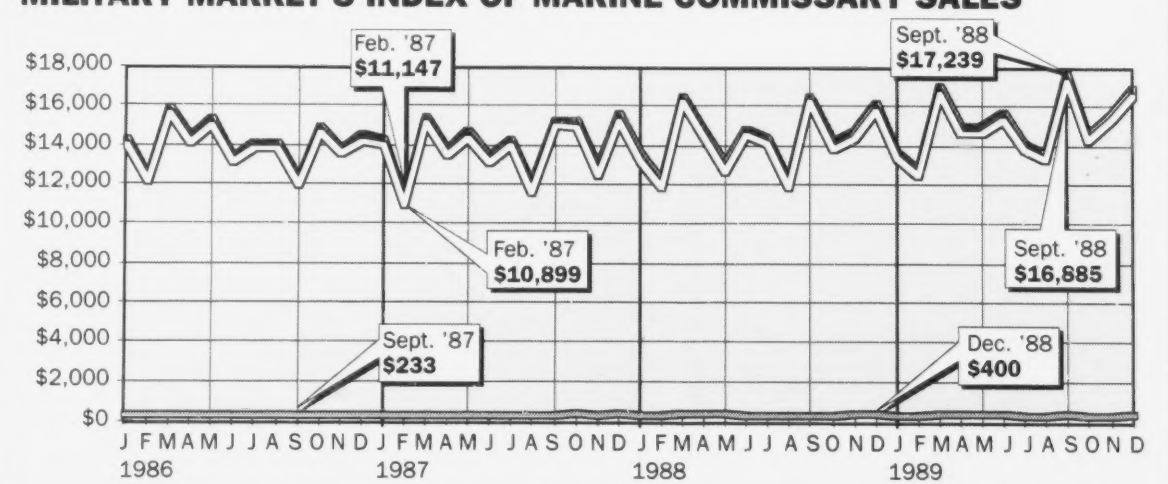
Joanne Ostendorf for Military Market Magazine

MILITARY MARKET'S INDEX OF NAVY COMMISSARY SALES



Joanne Ostendorf for Military Market Magazine

MILITARY MARKET'S INDEX OF MARINE COMMISSARY SALES



Joanne Ostendorf for Military Market Magazine

MILITARY MARKET'S INDEX OF COMMISSARY SALES YEARLY GROWTH

The following figures represent sales and percent of growth for Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marine commissaries from 1986–1989. Percentage of growth reflects actual dollar sales and are not adjusted for inflation. *(Add 000 to each sales figure.)*

	AIR FORCE		ARMY		NAVY		MARINES		TOTALS	
Year	*Sales*	*Growth*	*Sales*	*Growth*	*Sales*	*Growth*	*Sales*	*Growth*	*Sales*	*Growth*
1986	$2,248,790	—	$1,758,915	—	$815,800	—	$169,317	—	$5,000,477	—
1987	2,354,163	+4.69%	1,855,245	+5.48%	851,162	+3.64%	167,490	−1.08%	5,234,761	+4.69%
1988	2,461,579	+4.56%	1,928,885	+3.97%	882,447	+3.64%	172,660	+3.09%	5,452,265	+4.15%
1989	2,631,633	+6.90%	2,014,112	+4.42%	941,406	+6.68%	181,006	+4.83%	5,775,575	+5.93%

formation than just analyzing a single year's performance. "People really didn't understand that these kinds of peaks and valleys were going on in the business until it was charted out.

"Believe me, we've shown this [analysis] to dozens of manufacturers and they have used this as their lead-in to a lot of their presentations with their own management, saying, 'Here's the marketplace; don't think that this is a flat market, by any means. And look at the opportunities that can be there if we're promoting during some of the right periods.' "

But even if they use material from the overall picture, manufacturers and brokers still must use their own category data to plan their marketing efforts, since some categories do not follow the typical peak-and-valley trends. For example, while overall commissary sales in February are down, sales of frozen diet entrees go up significantly, since many shoppers go on weight-loss campaigns at that time.

(Next month, Part Two of this article will explain some of the overall peaks and valleys, and give examples of how marketers can use category or brand data in their market planning.)

WHAT CAUSES SALES TO FLUCTUATE?

Marketing to commissaries is affected by six basic factors: seasonality, inventory/ordering trends, stock fund allocation, space constraints, competition, and distribution. Analyzing data from all of these areas can help predict when sales will go up or when they'll go down, and when promotions should be scheduled.

Seasonality is a major factor. It means what time of year a product sells best, when one product should be promoted over another one, and what months may be good or bad for sales in general. Seasonality for individual products can be driven by the weather (hot chocolate in the winter) or eating habits for certain times of the year (dieting in the spring). Overall sales may be affected by shoppers who are on vacation (low sales) or entertaining (increased sales).

And, in the end, a perfectly planned marketing campaign can be thrown off by the ordering patterns of the commissary systems. When stores take inventory, they automatically order less product in order to make the inventory process less complicated for themselves. Commissary officials may set caps on how much they will order in a given period. And they may not account for seasonality factors when they place their orders.

Commissary officials can also be guided by preconceptions. If they perceive that December's volume will be greater, they won't hold back the funding needed for extra quantities of merchandise. But if they perceive that sales for another month are predestined to be lower, they may not let go of additional dollars, even if those dollars could make a difference in how much they sell.

And sometimes decisions about ordering are out of the control of the commissary system, as when the stock fund money simply runs out, which has occasionally happened, in the Army commissary system, especially. In addition, while some promotions work well in large commissaries, the space constraints of smaller stores may preclude them from ordering the quantities needed for a mass or long-running display.

Obviously, marketers also need to consider what their competitors are doing. Is it good business to go head to head with a competitor's major promotion? Or is it wiser to wait for another month?

There may be data available that can help answer these questions. The charts and graphs in this story provide some insights on how to adjust to these factors, or how these factors actually affect sales patterns. MM

NEXT MONTH

In the July issue of MILITARY MARKET, Part Two of this article will take a closer look at the range of the peaks and valleys of commissary sales. We'll give marketers some examples of how they can use specific category or brand data in their market planning. And we'll talk with resale experts — from the trade and from the government — to attempt to understand what the data is telling us.

Extended hours

Dawn of the Age of the Mini-Comm

by Karen McBeth, Associate Editor

It was the plains state of Oklahoma that led the charge toward extended evening commissary hours, when the Army's program at Fort Sill was followed by a similar one for neighboring Tinker AFB. Now, at least 19 Army and Air Force commissaries are offering limited-service, evening hours within the main store. And the Marine Corps recently followed suit with one of its commissaries.

In addition, Army and Air Force commissary officials are testing shifted hours, when stores operate with full staffs later into the evening by cutting back the hours on other operating days, or by opening later in the morning.

SHIFTED HOURS

The Jones Commission said the so-called "extended hours concept" is being "successfully used" by TSA, generating sales per operating hour that are four times those in mini-marts. *[See chart for comparison.]*

The program provides full-service in the main commissary for extended hours during the evening. According to the Jones Commission report, one way of offering extended hours six days a week is by closing the store on one slow day and shifting those hours to the other evenings.

SAVING TIME AND MONEY

	Mini-Mart	Extended Hours
Sales per operating hour	$3,161	$12,836
Sales per transaction	$30	$49
Average transactions per hour	93	260

SOURCE: Jones Commission's DoD Study of the Military Commissary System

"The store is able to increase total shopping hours available and offer full-service during the more popular evening hours," the report states, describing the added advantage of using the non-operating day for upkeep and resets.

However, TSA reports that it has not needed to shut down an additional day at the locations which have the extended-hours concept. At Fort Benning, Ga.; Fort Lewis, Wash.; Fort Belvoir, Va.; and Hanau and Robinson Barracks, Germany, "hours of operation have been extended and are being provided for patrons to shop and receive full service," said Kelly Cornwell, a commissary management specialist in TSA's Directorate of Operations. He explained that the hours have been "shifted and expanded" away from the mornings and into the evenings.

Cornwell said that United States Army-Europe funded the extended hours at the European Region stores, including the mini-mart at Heidelberg. The proposed mini-mart at Wuerzburg may also require outside assistance; Cornwell said that TSA does not have the needed funding.

According to Cornwell, the average additional funding required to establish a mini-mart is about $60,000. On the other hand, because the extended-hours program often relies on shifting hours of operation and not expanding them, these cases require no additional funding.

AFCOMS is exploring the use of a similiar extended full-service program. Spokesmen for the agency told MILITARY MARKET that the agency's commander, Maj. Gen. Robert Swarts, prefers the extended or shifted hour concept over the mini-comm program, since stores can offer full service to their patrons. Spokesman Ken Perrotte explained that the agency plans to phase out its mini-comms and go to shifted hours.

In April, AFCOMS began testing shifted hours at the Offutt AFB, Neb., commissary, which has been operating as a mini-comm in the evenings. Perrotte said Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, will be the next location to implement extended or shifted hours. That commissary will open at 10 a.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, instead of the current 8:30 a.m. On those four days, the store will be open until 8 p.m.

MINI-COMMS

In testimony at a recent hearing, the Troop Support Agency's commander said that "rescheduling and shifting of resources" at Fort Sill "have kept expenses and overhead extremely low." Brig. Gen. Charles St. Arnaud explained that, while sales per labor hour for normal operations average $125, the "mini-mart" operation has sales of $741 per labor hour.

And, since the concept proved to be "an exceptional patron pleaser," TSA has expanded it to six other ConUS commissaries. Now, in addition to Fort Sill, commissaries at Fort Carson, Colo.; Granite City AD, Ill.; Fort Sam Houston, Texas; White Sands Missile Range, N.M.; and Fort Drum, N.Y., offer the so-called "mini-comms." As of April, the commissary at Heidelberg, Germany, added a mini-comm in the evenings, and Wuerzburg, Germany, has been proposed as another site.

The Air Force Commissary Service is testing the mini-comm program at 12 stores besides Tinker: Bolling AFB, D.C.; England AFB, La.; Hill AFB, Utah; Kadena AB, Okinawa; RAF Lakenheath, U.K.; Luke AFB, Ariz.; McChord AFB, Wash.; Minot AFB, N.D.; Norton AFB, Calif.; Offutt AFB, Neb.; Patrick AFB, Fla.; and Lackland AFB, Texas.

The Marine Corps reports that it does not have the funding to increase hours at its stores. However, with help from the installation, the Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, commissary started an evening-hour program in February. Operating hours were increased from 48 per week to 66 per week, with the store open seven days now.

Joseph Jeu, head of the Marine Corps Services Branch, explained that the base provided support and funding for the additional hours — two work years, or about $30,000. Now the store is open from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the evenings. Services like meat cutting are not offered, and customers must shop with a hand basket, not a cart.

Adding hours has a direct impact on sales, as shown by the Camp Pendleton, Calif., commissary, which went from a 5-day operation to a 6-day schedule last October. With the added day, sales through February were up 15.1 percent, said Jeu.